

Contributed

OUR BRIGHTSIDE LETTER On Letter Writing.

Now-a-days we do not write letters as our Fathers and Mothers did, good, long, full of family and neighborhood tidings, gossip, moralizing, and sentimental epistles; we trust to the newspapers very much and the more frequent intercourse of ourselves or of others and old time letters are not in vogue, the more the pity. Such epistles were the literary efforts of a former generation, giving to many the fine culture of a literary and frequent expression of views and sentiments a culture of which there is in our day little or no exercise or growth.

What a surprise and pleasure it is to open a box of old letters and find how superior was the mental force and the literary quality of the people of three or four generations ago. They who never thought of writing a book, or anything else for the public eye, wrote letters, had views and knew how to express them on a thousand subjects. It was education and fine cultivation to many of a class who now write little or nothing, a few lines or a postal card.

It is a pathetic thing to go back in our lives, as we read the letters old and yellow of three or four decades ago. What memories are stirred, of the friends of early days, of their love and faithfulness, of things happy and sometimes sad, of our little romances, of details of life that are nearly gone from memory's tablet. The years had more in them than we had ever been accustomed to think, more friends, more events, more times of happiness, more forces coming to make the remittant what we now are. Shall we destroy this box—full of records of the past? They are so personal. They can never interest others as they do ourselves. Perhaps we had best see them perish before we go away ourselves.

Letter writing is a fortunate gift with some people. They write with such ease and so well, and tell their story so cheerfully, that unconsciously their letters are works of finest art. We envy them while we admire and enjoy their epistles exceedingly. One is only a neighborhood event, one is all about the absorbing book, one is a little journey in some strange land and one is just pure, unselfish affection and sympathy. They bring sunshine into shaded lots, companionship where there is loneliness and warm up the heart that is growing cold.

It is said that a line of division among letters is that some are so vital, so thoroughly characteristic that no one else could possibly have written them. Carlyle is always Carlyle and Gladstone is always himself. While the letters of Mr. Macauley could have never been written by any one else. Is it that character is so intense and forceful that it goes out inevitably in conversation and in all the work of the pen?

In modern times there has been a passion for publishing the private letters of public men. Sometimes it has been to their honor and sometimes to their dishonor. The idea is that a man in public

life is altogether the property of the public; that his fellows have a right to know the whole story; that if we are to study history nothing must be covered, and a man's most private thoughts, aims, aspirations must be published abroad. That latter posthumous publicity is one of the things he has to pay for his elevation. Perhaps their peril of publicity is a moral support to the public man and a protection to the people around him.

One need not go back to the far-off letters of Abelard and Eloise or to the mysterious Junius, or the poor conventionalities of Chesterfield to his son, or the vanities and follies of Horace Walpole, or letters of Madam D'Ablay. There are better epistles than these and very much nearer; epistles never intended for the public, without reserve, wholehearted, with pure and lofty thoughts and noble desires for those to whom they are written. In all literature we do not know of better letters than the private letters of two noble Virginians, Mathew Fontain Maury and Robt. E. Lee.

J. P. S.

THE PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER Wanting to Burn Heretics.

Recently there appeared in a weekly inter-denominational paper, published in New York—and which goes into many Presbyterian homes—a copy of a famous picture by Geets, showing a beautiful Christian maiden in 1526, who, having been condemned by the Romish council for holding the doctrines of Luther, now being led forth to execution, preceded by soldiers and followed by long, white robed, cowed priests, with a crowd, some in rage, some in pity, looking on as they crowded the cathedral steps. This picture, covering about a third of a page, is followed by an editorial, giving a full account of the case with the following comment:

"It seems inconceivable to us now that the leaders calling themselves by the name of Christ could have condemned a girl so young and frail" (why condemn any, young or not, "frail" or not?) "to a death so horrible."

Then the writer tells us that no one period holds a monopoly of the persecuting period. To prove this latter statement, and to bolster up the persecuting spirit, that only now prevails where Rome dominates, he adds:

"It is but a short time ago that a Presbyterian said, openly on the platform of a meeting in Philadelphia: 'If I had my way about it, I would have an executioner called in to deal with all heretics and blasphemers. Burning at the stake would be too good for those who revile religion and take the Lord's name in vain. The growth of heresy is such today that nothing but such measures as this can stop it.'"

As soon as I read this article published March 3, it impressed me as a lie out of the whole cloth. One can imagine that a Jesuit, or a reporter believing the dogma, "The end justifies the means," inspired by the church, that "never changes" (?) and with the spirit of the year 1526, hit upon the plan to implicate the Presbyterian Church. It is surprising that an editor, of a religious paper, did not verify his statement before sending it broadcast.

The correction did not come for three

following issues, and only then was it brought out after two correspondents had called him to account, assuring him that no such remarks were made. Then, not as prominently on the page, as his former charge, but at the foot of a column devoted to questions and answers, and in fine print. Many a reader would see the copy of the famous picture and the prominent editorial, but not so with the admission that it was "quoted from certain papers."

Yes, indeed, and no doubt from the "yellow sheets." As many know rumors to injure reputations are often hatched out of the imaginations of reporters, or concocted by some Jesuit, and then when proved false, often are not noticed, or, if so, in some secluded place—it may be among the advertisements. It may not be so evident as it was in Bryon's day of the "magazines," but of secular journals it may be said:

"A would-be satirist, a hired buffoon,
A monthly scribbler of some low lampoon

Condemned to drudge the meanest of the mean,

And furnish falsehoods for a magazine."

N. Keff. Smith.

James Island, S. C.

REMARKABLE MOVEMENTS IN KOREA.

By Rev. J. Leighton Stuart.

Over a year ago Rev. Jonathan Goforth of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission in Honan Province went to Korea to study first-hand the remarkable spiritual movements which had been taking place there. Great audiences of Christians were being swept by a common impulse to confess and make restitution for their sins. One after another, officers in the congregations, church-members, children in the schools, sometimes outsiders even, they would tell of wrong-doing or wrong thinking often accompanying their statements with bitter weeping and every physical sign of intense mental anguish. Old grievances and hatreds were wiped out, and a cleansing and fresh invigoration seemed to be touching every phase of church life, spreading from one center to another, and out into the isolated villages. Returning home Mr. Goforth was invited to recount his impressions in some of the Manchurian churches, when the audiences who listened seemed to be swept by a similar impulse. Day after day the meetings would progress with increasing evidence of a strange supernatural power at work. Every variety of crime and error would be confessed. Then those present would carry the enthusiasm to country congregations and similar scenes would be enacted. Other paces invited Mr. Goforth to visit them, and in every place the working of the Spirit of God was more or less apparent. Last summer Mr. Goforth visited two of the summer retreats where missionaries assembled and spoke to them of his experiences bringing new hope and faith to many a discouraged worker. Among others the missionaries living in Nanking invited him here and he has just conducted a nine days' meeting of remarkable significance. For weeks before his coming much definite and earnest prayer had been offering. We all feel that one chief reason why the Church does not grow more in China is because of sin